



# HOUSE JOURNAL

## SECOND REGULAR SESSION, 2025

7<sup>th</sup> Day, Second Regular Session

Thursday, November 6, 2025

*The House of Representatives of the Twenty-Fourth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature convened its Seventh Day, Second Regular Session on Thursday, November 6, 2025, at 10:33 a.m. in the House Chamber on Capitol Hill, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.*

*The Honorable Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez, Speaker of the House, presided.*

*A moment of silence was observed.*

### ROLL CALL

*The Clerk called the roll for attendance with the following results:*

Representative Roy Christopher A. Ada	Present
Representative Vincent Raymond Aldan	Present
Representative Daniel Iwashita Aquino Jr.	Present
Representative Blas Jonathan "BJ" Tenorio Attao	Present
Representative Roman Cepeda Benavente	Present
Representative Angelo Atalig Camacho	Present
Representative Diego Vincent Fejeran Camacho	Present
Representative Joel Castro Camacho	Present
Representative Joseph Arriola Flores	Present
Representative Marissa Renee Flores	Present
Representative Thomas John Dela Cruz Manglona	Present
Representative Julie Marie Atalig Ogo	Present
Representative Malcolm Jason Omar	Present
Representative Raymond Ulloa Palacios	Present
Representative Elias Jerome Malite Rangamar	Absent (Excused)
Representative John Paul Palacios Sablan	Present
Representative Patrick Hofschneider San Nicolas	Present
Representative Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez	Present
Representative Denita Kaipat Yangetmai	Present
Representative Ralph Naraja Yumul	Present

<sup>1</sup> Members participating electronically were connected via Microsoft Teams in accordance with Rule IV, Section 1 of the Official Rules of the House of Representatives of the Twenty-Fourth Legislature, which permits members to appear, participate, and vote electronically through telephone, video, internet, or other electronic means, provided that the member is physically present within the Commonwealth.

Clerk Linda B. Muña: Mr. Speaker, we have 19 members present and 1 member absent.

Speaker Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez: Thank you, Clerk. With 19 members present, that constitutes a quorum. Let the record reflect that Representative Elias Rangamar is excused for today's session. Before we proceed to Item No. 2, Public Comments, I recognize the Floor Leader for the proper motion.

*The Floor Leader moved to suspend Rule III, Section 6.*

RULE III. SECTIONS AND MEETINGS.

Section 6. Notice of Sessions.

Not less than 72 hours prior to convening a Regular or Special Session, the Speaker or a majority of the members of the House, shall file a written public notice of the date, time, and place of a session with the Clerk and post the same at the executive branch administration building and the Legislature's website. When possible, notices under this section shall be given to at least one newspaper of general circulation. Notices shall contain an agenda of items to be considered at the session. Final disposition shall not be taken on any other matter at such session. Once filed as part of this notice, the agenda may only be changed by adding items thereto by the recorded vote of the majority of the members of the House.

*The motion was seconded; the Chair opened the floor for discussion. There being no discussion on the floor, the Chair recognized the Clerk to call the roll for vote.*

*The Clerk called the roll on the motion to suspend Rule III, Section 6 with the following results:*

Representative Roy Christopher A. Ada	Yes
Representative Vincent Raymond Aldan	Yes
Representative Daniel Iwashita Aquino Jr.	Yes
Representative Blas Jonathan "BJ" Tenorio Attao	Yes
Representative Roman Cepeda Benavente	Yes
Representative Angelo Atalig Camacho	Yes
Representative Diego Vincent Fejeran Camacho	Yes
Representative Joel Castro Camacho	Yes
Representative Joseph Arriola Flores	Yes
Representative Marissa Renee Flores	Yes
Representative Thomas John Dela Cruz Manglona	Yes
Representative Julie Marie Atalig Ogo	Yes
Representative Malcolm Jason Omar	Yes
Representative Raymond Ulloa Palacios	Yes
Representative Elias Jerome Malite Rangamar	Absent (Excused)
Representative John Paul Palacios Sablan	Yes
Representative Patrick Hofschneider San Nicolas	Yes
Representative Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez	Yes
Representative Denita Kaipat Yangetmai	Yes
Representative Ralph Naraja Yumul	Yes

<sup>1</sup> Members participating electronically were connected via Microsoft Teams in accordance with Rule IV, Section 1 of the Official Rules of the House of Representatives of the Twenty-Fourth Legislature, which permits members to appear, participate, and vote electronically through telephone, video, internet, or other electronic means, provided that the member is physically present within the Commonwealth.

Clerk Linda B. Muña: Mr. Speaker, all 19 members present voted “yes.”

Speaker Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez: Thank you, Clerk. With 19 members present voting “yes,” the motion carries. We now move down to Item No. 2, Public Comments. The podium is open to receive any comments. Please state your name and the entity you represent, you have five minutes. If you have statements, please submit them to the Sergeant-at-Arms for forwarding to the Clerk’s office.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

*Public Comments was presented by three individuals on the following items:*

**H. B. No. 24-68:** To conditionally authorize the Marianas Public Land Trust to establish a margin account solely to facilitate the \$29,000,000 loan authorized under Public Law 24-13, subject to the continuing fiduciary and constitutional duties of the Trustees.

**GOV. COMM. 24-74:** *FY 2025 MPLT Preliminary Remittance and Emergency Food Benefits Bill [For Consideration]*

*There being no further public comments presented, the Chair proceeded to Item No. 3, Adoption of Journals, and recognized the Clerk.*

### **ADOPTION OF JOURNALS**

*The Clerk announced the following House Journals:*

*Fourth Day, Second Regular Session Journal – September 27, 2025*

*The Chair recognized the Floor Leader.*

*The Floor Leader moved to adopt Fourth Day, Second Regular Session Journal – September 27, 2025. The motion was seconded; the Chair opened the floor for discussion. There being no discussion on the floor, the motion to adopt Fourth Day, Second Regular Session Journal – September 27, 2025 was carried by voice vote. There was no “nay” vote.*

*The Chair proceeded to Item No. 4, Introduction of Bills, and recognized Representative Blas Jonathan “BJ” Tenorio Attao, under House Bills.*

### **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

*House Bills:*

*Representative Blas Jonathan “BJ” Tenorio Attao formally introduced the following bill; subsequently requested the Chair that it be placed on the Bill Calendar:*

**H. B. No. 24-70:** To authorize the Public School System (PSS) to utilize unrestricted funds previously appropriated to PSS for Fiscal Year 2026; and for other purposes. **Introduced by REP. BLAS JONATHAN “BJ” T. ATTAO** of Saipan, Precinct 3 (*for himself, Representatives Roman C. Benavente, Angelo A. Camacho, Diego V. F. Camacho, Joel C. Camacho, Joseph A. Flores, Marissa R. Flores, Thomas J. DiC. Manglona, Julie M. A. Ogo, Malcolm J. Omar, Raymond U. Palacios, Elias J. M. Rangamar, John Paul P. Sablan, Edmund S. Villagomez, and Denita Kaipat Yangetmai*) on November 6, 2025; subsequently moved and placed on the Bill Calendar.

*The Chair recognized the Floor Leader.*

*The Floor Leader moved to suspend Rule IX, Section 8.*

*The motion was seconded; the Chair opened the floor for discussion. There being no discussion on the floor, the motion to suspend Rule IX, Section 8 was carried by voice vote. There was no “nay” vote.*

*The Chair recognized Representative Joel Castro Camacho.*

*Representative Joel Castro Camacho formally introduced the following bill, which was then referred to the House*

**[Added-11/6/2025] H. B. No. 24-71:** To allow for the Substance Abuse, Addiction & Rehabilitation (SAAR) Program to promulgate fees; and for other purposes. **Introduced by REP. JOEL CASTRO CAMACHO** of Saipan, Precinct 4 (*for himself*) on November 6, 2025; subsequently referred to the House Committee on Health and Welfare.

*The Chair opened the floor for introductions on unnumbered House Bills and recognized the Floor Leader.*

*Representative Marissa Renee Flores formally introduced the following bill:*

**[Added-11/6/2025] H. B. No. 24-72:** To impose a remittance transfer tax within the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands equivalent to the federal excise tax under 26 U.S.C §4475, to ensure equitable revenue capture from outbound remittances, to strengthen compliance with federal fiscal policy; and for other purposes. **Introduced by REP. Marissa R. Flores** of Saipan, Precinct 3 (*for herself, representatives Roy C. A. Ada, Vincent R. Aldan, Daniel I. Aquino Jr., Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao, Roman C. Benavente, Angelo A. Camacho, Diego V. F. Camacho, Joel C. Camacho, Joseph A. Flores, Thomas J. DiC. Manglona,*

*Raymond U. Palacios, John Paul P. Sablan, Denita Kaipat Yangetmai, and Ralph N. Yumul*) on November 6, 2025.

*Representative Malcolm Jason Omar formally introduced the following bill:*

**[Added-11/6/2025] H. B. No. 24-73:** To provide a nonrefundable tax credit to taxpayers who make donations of cash or food supplies to qualified community-based service organizations. **Introduced by REP. MALCOLM J. OMAR** of Saipan, Precinct 4 (*for himself, and Representative Denita K. Yangetmai*) on November 6, 2025.

*Representative Blas Jonathan “BJ” Tenorio Attao formally introduced the following bill; subsequently requested the Chair that it be placed on the Bill Calendar:*

**[Added-11/6/2025] H. B. No. 24-74:** To appropriate funds derived from trust interest income from the Marianas Public Land Trust towards payment of household allotments of Nutrition Assistance Program (NAP) benefits for November 2025. **Introduced by REP. BLAS JONATHAN “BJ” T. ATTAO** of Saipan, Precinct 3 (*for himself, Representatives Roy C. A. Ada, Vincent R. Aldan, Daniel I. Aquino Jr., Roman C. Benavente, Angelo A. Camacho, Diego V. F. Camacho, Joel C. Camacho, Joseph A. Flores, Marissa R. Flores, Thomas J. DiC. Manglona, Malcolm J. Omar, Raymond U. Palacios, John Paul P. Sablan, Edmund S. Villagomez, Denita Kaipat Yangetmai, and Ralph N. Yumul*) on November 6, 2025; subsequently moved and placed on the Bill Calendar.

*The Chair recognized the Floor Leader.*

*The Floor Leader moved to suspend Rule IX, Section 8.*

*The motion was seconded; the Chair opened the floor for discussion. There being no discussion on the floor, the motion to suspend Rule IX, Section 8 was carried by voice vote. There was no “nay” vote.*

*There being no further introductions of unnumbered House Bills, the Chair proceeded to House Local Bills.*

#### ***House Local Bills:***

*There being no introductions of unnumbered House Local Bills and no items under House Legislative Initiatives, the Chair proceeded to Item No. 5, Introduction of Resolutions, and recognized Representative Thomas John Dela Cruz Manglona, under House Resolutions.*

### **INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS**

#### ***House Resolutions:***

*Representative Thomas John Dela Cruz Manglona formally introduced the following resolutions and, with no objections, requested that it be introduced by the Committee of the Whole.*

*There being no objections on the floor, the resolution was accordingly introduced by the Committee of the Whole. The Chair then ordered that the resolution be placed on the Resolution Calendar for consideration.*

**[Added-11/6/2025] H. RES. NO. 24-16:** To recognize and commend Project Buddy Check 670 for its unwavering dedication to empowering veterans and their families in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and for its longstanding contributions to community service, unity, and the well-being of our veterans. **Introduced by REP. THOMAS J. DLC. MANGLONA** of Saipan, Precinct 5 (*for himself, Representatives Roy C.A. Ada, Vincent R. Aldan, Daniel I. Aquino Jr., Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao, Roman C. Benavente, Angelo A. Camacho, Diego V. F. Camacho, Joel C. Camacho, Joseph A. Flores, Marissa R. Flores, Julie M. A. Ogo, Malcolm J. Omar, Raymond U. Palacios, Elias J.M. Rangamar, John Paul P. Sablan, Patrick H. San Nicolas, Edmund S. Villagomez, Denita Kaipat Yangetmai, and Ralph N. Yumul*) on November 6, 2025; subsequently moved and place on the Resolution Calendar.

*Representative Roy Christopher Aldan Ada formally introduced the following resolution and, there being no objection, requested that it be introduced by the Committee of the Whole.*

*There being no objections on the floor, the resolution was accordingly introduced by the Committee of the Whole. The Chair then ordered that the resolution be placed on the Resolution Calendar for consideration.*

**[Added-11/6/2025] H. RES. NO. 24-17:** To honor and commend the Honorable Diego Tenorio Benavente for his lifetime of public service and enduring contributions to the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and to extend the Legislature’s collective prayers and gratitude to him and his family. **Introduced by REP. ROY C. A. ADA** of Saipan, Precinct 1 (*for himself, Representatives Vincent R. Aldan, Daniel I. Aquino Jr., Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao, Roman C. Benavente, Angelo A. Camacho, Diego V. F. Camacho, Joel C. Camacho, Joseph A. Flores, Marissa R. Flores, Thomas J. DLC. Manglona, Julie M. A. Ogo, Malcolm J. Omar, Raymond U. Palacios, John Paul P. Sablan, Patrick H. San Nicolas, Edmund S. Villagomez, Denita Kaipat Yangetmai, and Ralph N. Yumul*) on November 6, 2025; subsequently moved and place on the Resolution Calendar.

*There being no introductions of House Resolutions and no items under House Joint Resolutions, the Chair proceeded to House Commemorative Resolutions and recognized himself.*

#### **House Joint Resolutions:**

None

***House Commemorative Resolutions:***

*Representative Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez formally introduced the following resolution and, there being no objection, requested that it be introduced by the Committee of the Whole.*

*There being no objections on the floor, the resolution was accordingly introduced by the Committee of the Whole. The Chair then ordered that the resolution be placed on the Resolution Calendar for consideration.*

**[Added-11/6/2025] C. RES. NO. 2-5:** To celebrate and commemorate the Northern Marianas Islands Football Association’s (NMIFA) 20th Anniversary and the remarkable impact NMIFA has made in the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands. **Introduced by REP. EDMUND S. VILLAGOMEZ** of Saipan, Precinct 3, (for himself, Representatives Roy C.A. Ada, Vincent R. Aldan, Daniel I. Aquino Jr., Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao, Roman C. Benavente, Angelo A. Camacho, Diego V. F. Camacho, Joel C. Camacho, Joseph A. Flores, Marissa R. Flores, Thomas J. DiC. Manglona, Julie M. A. Ogo, Malcolm J. Omar, Raymond U. Palacios, John Paul P. Sablan, Patrick H. San Nicolas, Denita Kaipat Yangetmai, and Ralph N. Yumul) on November 6, 2025; subsequently moved and place on the Resolution Calendar.

*There being no further introductions of House Commemorative Resolutions and no items under House Concurrent Resolutions, the Chair proceeded to Item No. 6, Messages from the Governor, and recognized the Clerk.*

**MESSAGES FROM THE GOVERNOR**

*The Clerk announced the following Messages from the Governor:*

GOV. COMM. 24-67: (10/17/2025) From Governor David M. Apatang, expressing strong support for the passage of House Bill 24-57, “*To re-establish a Government Liability Cap,*” noting the bill’s importance in limiting the Commonwealth’s exposure to excessive tort liability and addressing the Supreme Court’s decision in *Maratita v. CHCC (2024 MP 10)*. [For info] read on October 24, 2025

GOV. COMM. 24-68 & GOV. COMM. 24-69 read on October 24, 2025

GOV. COMM. 24-70: (10/24/2025) From Governor David M. Apatang, requesting legislative authorization of an emergency budget appropriation of \$3.9 million from the FY 2026 General Fund Revised Budget to sustain the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP/NAP) for November 2025 due to federal funding suspension. [For Consideration] Referred to the House Committee on Ways and Means on November 6, 2025.

GOV. COMM. 24-71: (10/24/2025) From Governor David M. Apatang, transmitting for legislative consideration an Administration-sponsored bill to amend Public Law 18-56 (Casino Act of 2014). The measure seeks to modernize the CNMI's gaming industry by repealing the exclusive casino license model and authorizing multiple non-exclusive licenses to promote competition and investment. It further establishes a Casino Gross Revenue Tax (CGRT) to fund retirees' pensions, strengthens regulatory oversight through the Commonwealth Casino Commission, and integrates online gaming and digital payment systems to expand fiscal revenues. [*For Consideration*] Referred to the House Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations and to the House Committee on Gaming on November 6, 2025.

GOV. COMM. 24-72: (10/30/2025) Informing the House that he signed into law, H. B. No. 24-45, SD1, (*To re-appropriate Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000.00) under Public Law No. 21-10, Section 2(G), for operational expenses of the Office of the Mayor of the Municipality of Rota and for the Rota patients' subsistence allowance.*). Became **Public Law No. 24-16**. [*For info*]

GOV. COMM. 24-73: (10/30/2025) From Governor David M. Apatang transmitting Directive 2025- 008A, implementing revised austerity measures for Executive Branch departments and agencies for Fiscal Year 2026. [*For info*]

[Added-11/6/2025] GOV. COMM. 24-74: *FY 2025 MPLT Preliminary Remittance and Emergency Food Benefits Bill* [*For Consideration*]

*The Chair opened the floor for discussion on the floor and recognized the Floor Leader.*

Floor Leader Marissa Renee Flores: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just like to comment on Governor's Communication 24-70, in regard to the NAP supplement. I know that there are members of his executive team in the audience, and just for the record, I would like to please ensure, or ask, that the Secretary of NAP give us, at least this body, a Health and Welfare update of the data of the recipients of this submission and request. As we know, we spoke about this in the 23<sup>rd</sup> Legislature, and we had anticipated that there was going to be either an increase or a shortfall. Here we are in the 24<sup>th</sup> Legislature seeking assistance. So, Secretary, or to the Governor's team, please ensure that a report will be submitted – accurate data, all the total number of recipients for each island, employment status. I think that this is important for us to plan accordingly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

*Pursuant to the actions taken, Governor's Communications No. 24-71, referencing, "(10/24/2025) From Governor David M. Apatang, requesting legislative authorization of an emergency budget appropriation of \$3.9 million from the FY 2026 General Fund Revised Budget to sustain the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP/NAP) for November 2025 due to federal funding suspension.", was referred to the House Committee on Ways and Means; and Governor's Communication No. 24-71, referencing, "(10/24/2025) From Governor David M. Apatang, transmitting for legislative consideration an Administration-sponsored bill to amend Public Law 18-56 (Casino Act of 2014). The measure seeks to modernize the CNMI's gaming*

*industry by repealing the exclusive casino license model and authorizing multiple non-exclusive licenses to promote competition and investment. It further establishes a Casino Gross Revenue Tax (CGRT) to fund retirees' pensions, strengthens regulatory oversight through the Commonwealth Casino Commission, and integrates online gaming and digital payment systems to expand fiscal revenues.”, was referred to the House Committees on Judicial and Governmental Operations, and Gaming.*

*There being no further discussion on the floor and no items under Item No. 7, Senate Communications, through Item No. 9, Communications from the Judicial Branch, the Chair proceeded to Item No. 10, Communications from the Departments & Agencies, and recognized the Clerk.*

### **SENATE COMMUNICATIONS**

None

### **HOUSE COMMUNICATIONS**

None

### **COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE JUDICIAL BRANCH**

None

### **COMMUNICATIONS FROM DEPARTMENTS & AGENCIES:**

*The Clerk announced the following Communications from Departments & Agencies:*

DEPT./AGCY. COMM. 24-19: (10/29/2025) Department of Finance submitting the MPLT EDA Line of Credit Status Quarterly Report for the period July 16 – October 15, 2025, pursuant to the MPLT Line of Credit Terms and Conditions. [*For info*] Referred to the House Committee on Ways and Means for information on November 6, 2025.

DEPT./AGCY. COMM. 24-20: From the Department of Finance submitting FY 2025 Citizen-Centric Report. [*For info*]

DEPT./AGCY. COMM. 24-21: From the Department of Labor, (First Sen. District) submitting FY 2025 Citizen-Centric Report. [*For info*]

DEPT./AGCY. COMM. 24-22: From the Department of Public Lands submitting FY 2025 Citizen- Centric Report. [*For info*]

DEPT./AGCY. COMM. 24-23: From the Department of Corrections submitting FY 2025 Citizen- Centric Report. [*For info*]

*Pursuant to the action taken, Departments & Agencies Communication No. 24-19, referencing, “(10/29/2025) Department of Finance submitting the MPLT EDA Line of Credit Status Quarterly Report for the period July 16 – October 15, 2025, pursuant to the MPLT Line of Credit Terms and Conditions.”, was referred to the House Committee on Ways and Means.*

*There being no discussion on the floor, the Chair proceeded to Item No. 11, Miscellaneous Communications, and recognized the Clerk.*

### **MISCELLANEOUS COMMUNICATIONS**

*The Clerk announced the following Miscellaneous Communications:*

MISC. COMM. 24-67: From the CNMI Scholarship & Financial Assistance Office submitting FY 2025 Citizen-Centric Report. [*For info*]

MISC. COMM. 24-68: From the Marianas Visitors Authority submitting FY 2025 Citizen-Centric Report. [*For info*]

MISC. COMM. 24-69: From the 20th Tinian Municipal Council submitting FY 2025 Citizen-Centric Report. [*For info*]

MISC. COMM. 24-70: From the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library submitting FY 2025 Citizen-Centric Report. [*For info*]

MISC. COMM. 24-71: From the Substance Abuse Addiction and Rehabilitation Program submitting FY 2025 Citizen-Centric Report. [*For info*]

MISC. COMM. 24-72: From the Commonwealth Office of Transit Authority submitting FY 2025 Citizen-Centric Report. [*For info*]

MISC. COMM. 24-73: From the Office of Personnel Management submitting FY 2025 Citizen- Centric Report. [*For info*]

MISC. COMM. 24-74: From the Office of the Public Auditor submitting FY 2025 Citizen-Centric Report. [*For info*]

*There being no discussion on the floor, the Chair proceeded to Item No. 12, Reports of Standing Committees, and recognized the Clerk.*

### **REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES**

*The Clerk announced the following Reports of Standing Committees:*

**S. C. R. NO. 24-38:** Reporting on H. B. No. 24-43, entitled: “To create a new criminal offense for Desecration or Theft of Memorials and Historical Sites.” *Your*

*House Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations recommends that the House pass the bill in the form of **H. B. NO. 24-43, HD1.***

**S. C. R. NO. 24-39:** Reporting on H. B. No. 24-57, entitled: “To re-establish a Government Liability cap.” *Your House Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations recommends that the House pass **H. B. No. 24-57** in its current form.*

*The Chair recognized the Floor Leader.*

*The Floor Leader moved to adopt the following:*

**S. C. R. NO. 24-38:** Reporting on H. B. No. 24-43, entitled: “To create a new criminal offense for Desecration or Theft of Memorials and Historical Sites.” *Your House Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations recommends that the House pass the bill in the form of **H. B. NO. 24-43, HD1.***

*The motion was seconded; the Chair opened the floor for discussion. There being discussion on the floor, the motion to adopt S. C. R. No. 24-38 was carried by voice vote. There was no “nay” vote.*

*The Chair recognized the Floor Leader.*

*The Floor Leader moved to adopt the following:*

**S. C. R. NO. 24-39:** Reporting on H. B. No. 24-57, entitled: “To re-establish a Government Liability cap.” *Your House Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations recommends that the House pass **H. B. No. 24-57** in its current form.*

*The motion was seconded; the Chair opened the floor for discussion. There being no discussion on the floor, the motion to adopt S. C. R. No. 24-39 was carried by voice vote. There was no “nay” vote.*

*There being no items under Item No. 13, Reports of Special and Conference Committees, and Item No. 14, Unfinished Business, the Chair proceeded to Item No. 15, Resolution Calendar, and recognized the Floor Leader.*

## **RESOLUTION CALENDAR**

*The Floor Leader moved to adopt C. Res. No. 24-5:*

**C. RES. NO. 2-5:** To celebrate and commemorate the Northern Marianas Islands Football Association’s (NMIFA) 20th Anniversary and the remarkable impact NMIFA has made in the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands.

*The motion was seconded; the Chair opened the floor for discussion. There being no discussion on the floor, the motion to adopt C. Res. No. 24-5 was carried by voice vote. There was no “nay” vote.*

*The Chair proceeded to Item No. 16, Bill Calendar, and recognized the Floor Leader.*

## **BILL CALENDAR**

*The Chair called for recess.*

*The House recessed at 11:01 a.m.*

*Recess*

*The House reconvened at 11:06 a.m.*

Speaker Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez: Before we went on recess, we had just entered the Bill Calendar. I recognize the Floor Leader.

*The Floor Leader moved to suspend Rule VII, Section 9, and Rule IX, Sections 9 and 10.*

*The motion was seconded; the Chair opened the floor for discussion. There being no discussion on the floor, the motion to suspend Rule VII, Section 9 and, Rule IX, Sections 9 and 10 was carried by voice vote.*

*The Chair recognized the Floor Leader.*

*The Floor Leader moved for the passage on First and Final Reading of H. B. No. 24-68:*

**H. B. No. 24-68:** To conditionally authorize the Marianas Public Land Trust to establish a margin account solely to facilitate the \$29,000,000 loan authorized under Public Law 24-13, subject to the continuing fiduciary and constitutional duties of the Trustees.

*The motion was seconded; the Chair opened the floor for discussion and recognized Representative John Paul Palacios Sablan.*

Representative John Paul Palacios Sablan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At this time, I would like to offer a floor amendment that is on page 1, line 10: after the word “them,” we insert a period and delete the following text. However, such borrowing involves leverage and therefore carries some considerations and heightened risk. Also, on page 2, under line 17, subsection 103, delete the text in section 103 in its entirety all the way to page 3, lines 1 and 2. So move.

*The motion was seconded; the Chair opened the floor for discussion and recognized Representative John Paul Palacios Sablan.*

Representative John Paul Palacios Sablan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If I may ask, Mr. Speaker, that we allow the Clerk and the Legal Counsel to renumber the subsections as we have deleted section 103 in its entirety. Thank you.

*There being no further discussion on the floor, the motion to amend H. B. No. 24-68 was carried by voice vote. There was no “nay” vote.*

*The Chair proceeded to the motion for the passage on First and Final Reading of H. B. No. 24-68, HD1. The Chair opened for discussion recognized Representative John Paul Palacios Sablan.*

Representative John Paul Palacios Sablan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the members of Ways and Means, and to the whole August body for their continued work and meeting with the administration, and of course, the Marianas Pacific Land Trust Board of Trustees. As you all know, this proposed legislation before us is a working legislation with both the Executive and the Legislative Branches, including the Board of Trustees. As the Chairman of Ways and Means, I appeal to you all for your support that we pass House Bill No. 24-68, House Draft 1. As alluded by both Ms. Virginia Villagomez, and the Secretary of Finance Ms. Tacy Norita during public comments, the importance of this legislation as it is part of the fiscal reform plan that is being produced by the administration, Office of Insular Affairs, and the Office of the Delegate to the Commonwealth. So, I ask you all for your full support. Thank you.

*The Chair recognized the Floor Leader.*

Floor Leader Marissa Renee Flores: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and Chairman Sablan. I would be remiss if I do not mention that the Executive Committee, or the Executive Branch, just got back from their 902 talks, which we have yet to see. We have yet to know because it is still in negotiations. But to my understanding, we are now being placed in the corner because we have to demonstrate that we are suffering. Now, I am not sure, and yes, I will agree that we are suffering, but we are suffering at the hands of a much higher power. Now we are put in this position to fight among each other. This creates a conversation that if we do not help our people, we are not going to get a handout. For the record, I did not ask for a handout, nor are our people asking for a handout. I hope the Governor is watching, because the next team he decides to send better include my House Speaker and not just random, handpicked folks because they serve somebody else. That was injustice to begin with, without involving anybody from the Legislature, including our Speaker. Furthermore, the next time that this— I hope when we pass this, we get that handout soon. By tomorrow. Not next month or the following month, and not for me to demonstrate, or this House to demonstrate, that we are now, again, in crisis mode. They put us here in this position. They took away our tourism. They took away our immigration. They took a lot of things away. Let me be clear, and now you are asking me, the United States, big brother, to demonstrate that I am suffering. Yes, I am suffering. I have been suffering since 1999. Now we are put in this position to fight amongst each other. To create this conversation that if we do not help our people, we are not going to get a handout. This has to do with the United States Government. And when you all go back, whenever that may be, I highly recommend that, since we are now doing our job, include my Speaker on the next round of visits. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I yield my time.

*There being no further discussion on the floor, the Chair recognized the Clerk to call the roll for vote.*

*The Clerk called the roll on the motion for the passage of H. B. No. 24-68, HD1, First and Final Reading with the following results:*

Representative Roy Christopher A. Ada	Yes
Representative Vincent Raymond Aldan	No
Representative Daniel Iwashita Aquino Jr.	Yes
Representative Blas Jonathan “BJ” Tenorio Attao	Yes
Representative Roman Cepeda Benavente	Yes
Representative Angelo Atalig Camacho	Yes
Representative Diego Vincent Fejeran Camacho	Yes
Representative Joel Castro Camacho	Yes
Representative Joseph Arriola Flores	Yes
Representative Marissa Renee Flores	Yes
Representative Thomas John Dela Cruz Manglona	Yes
Representative Julie Marie Atalig Ogo	Yes
Representative Malcolm Jason Omar	Yes
Representative Raymond Ulloa Palacios	Yes
Representative Elias Jerome Malite Rangamar	Absent (Excused)
Representative John Paul Palacios Sablan	Yes
Representative Patrick Hofschneider San Nicolas	Yes
Representative Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez	Yes
Representative Denita Kaipat Yangetmai	Yes
Representative Ralph Naraja Yumul	Yes

<sup>1</sup> Members participating electronically were connected via Microsoft Teams in accordance with Rule IV, Section 1 of the Official Rules of the House of Representatives of the Twenty-Fourth Legislature, which permits members to appear, participate, and vote electronically through telephone, video, internet, or other electronic means, provided that the member is physically present within the Commonwealth.

Clerk Linda B. Muña: Mr. Speaker, 18 members voted “yes,” and 1 member voted “no.”

Speaker Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez: Thank you, Clerk. With 18 members voting “yes,” House Bill No. 24-68, House Draft 1 hereby passes the House. Thank you, colleagues. I recognize the Floor Leader.

*The Floor Leader moved for the passage on First and Final Reading of H. B. No. 24-43, HD1:*

**H. B. No. 24-43, HD1:** To create a new criminal offense for Desecration, Theft, or Attempted Sale of Stolen Memorials, Historical or Cultural Sites, and Property.

*The motion was seconded; the Chair opened the floor for discussion. There being no discussion on the floor, the Chair recognized the Clerk to call the roll for vote.*

*The Clerk called the roll on the motion for the passage of H. B. No. 24-43, HD1, First and Final Reading, with the following results:*

Representative Roy Christopher A. Ada	Yes
Representative Vincent Raymond Aldan	Yes
Representative Daniel Iwashita Aquino Jr.	Yes
Representative Blas Jonathan “BJ” Tenorio Attao	Yes
Representative Roman Cepeda Benavente	Yes
Representative Angelo Atalig Camacho	Yes
Representative Diego Vincent Fejeran Camacho	Yes
Representative Joel Castro Camacho	Yes
Representative Joseph Arriola Flores	Yes
Representative Marissa Renee Flores	Yes
Representative Thomas John Dela Cruz Manglona	Yes
Representative Julie Marie Atalig Ogo	Yes
Representative Malcolm Jason Omar	Yes
Representative Raymond Ulloa Palacios	Yes
Representative Elias Jerome Malite Rangamar	Absent (Excused)
Representative John Paul Palacios Sablan	Yes
Representative Patrick Hofschneider San Nicolas	Yes
Representative Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez	Yes
Representative Denita Kaipat Yangetmai	Yes
Representative Ralph Naraja Yumul	Yes

<sup>1</sup> Members participating electronically were connected via Microsoft Teams in accordance with Rule IV, Section 1 of the Official Rules of the House of Representatives of the Twenty-Fourth Legislature, which permits members to appear, participate, and vote electronically through telephone, video, internet, or other electronic means, provided that the member is physically present within the Commonwealth.

Clerk Linda B. Muña: Mr. Speaker, all 19 members present voted “yes.”

Speaker Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez: Thank you, Clerk. With all 19 members present voting “yes,” House Bill No. 24-43, House Draft 1 here by passes the House. I recognize the Floor Leader.

*The Floor Leader moved for the passage on First and Final Reading of H. B. No. 24-57:*

**H. B. No. 24-57:** To re-establish a Government Liability cap.

*The motion was seconded; the Chair opened the floor for discussion. There being no discussion on the floor, the Chair recognized the Clerk to call the roll for vote.*

*The Clerk called the roll on the motion for the passage of H. B. No. 24-57, First and Final Reading, with the following results:*

Representative Roy Christopher A. Ada	Yes
Representative Vincent Raymond Aldan	Yes
Representative Daniel Iwashita Aquino Jr.	Yes
Representative Blas Jonathan “BJ” Tenorio Attao	Yes
Representative Roman Cepeda Benavente	Yes
Representative Angelo Atalig Camacho	Yes
Representative Diego Vincent Fejeran Camacho	Yes
Representative Joel Castro Camacho	Yes
Representative Joseph Arriola Flores	Yes
Representative Marissa Renee Flores	Yes
Representative Thomas John Dela Cruz Manglona	Yes
Representative Julie Marie Atalig Ogo	Yes
Representative Malcolm Jason Omar	Yes
Representative Raymond Ulloa Palacios	Yes
Representative Elias Jerome Malite Rangamar	Absent (Excused)
Representative John Paul Palacios Sablan	Yes
Representative Patrick Hofschneider San Nicolas	Yes
Representative Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez	Yes
Representative Denita Kaipat Yangetmai	Yes
Representative Ralph Naraja Yumul	Yes

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Clerk Linda B. Muña: Mr. Speaker, all 19 members present voted “yes.”

Speaker Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez: Thank you, Clerk. With all 19 members present voting “yes,” House Bill No. 24-57 hereby passes the House. I recognize the Floor Leader.

*The Floor Leader moved for the passage on First and Final Reading of H. B. No. 24-70:*

**H. B. No. 24-70:** To authorize the Public School System (PSS) to utilize unrestricted funds previously appropriated to PSS for Fiscal Year 2026; and for other purposes.

*The Chair called for recess.*

*The House recessed at 11:18 a.m.*

*Recess*

*The House reconvened at 11:18 a.m.*

Speaker Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez: Before we went on recess, the Floor Leader made a motion. I recognize the Floor Leader.

*The Floor Leader moved to withdraw the motion on the passage on First and Final Reading of H. B. No. 24-70.*

*The Floor Leader moved to suspend Rule VII, Section 9 and, Rule IX, Sections 9 and 10.*

*The motion was seconded; the Chair opened the floor for discussion. There being no discussion on the floor, the motion to suspend Rule VII, Section 9 and, Rule IX, Sections 9 and 10 was carried by voice vote. There was no “nay” vote.*

*The Floor Leader moved for the passage on First and Final Reading of H. B. No. 24-70:*

**H. B. No. 24-70:** To authorize the Public School System (PSS) to utilize unrestricted funds previously appropriated to PSS for Fiscal Year 2026; and for other purposes.

*The motion was seconded; the Chair opened the floor for discussion and recognized Representative Blas Jonathan “BJ” Tenorio Attao.*

Representative Blas Jonathan “BJ” Tenorio Attao: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the general public or to the municipalities, just to be clear, these monies are not moving any sort of monies from other government agencies, entities, or municipalities. These monies that we are allowing the Public School System to utilize are monies that actually belong to them. Over the last couple of fiscal years, and through financial constraints, the Public School System was getting allotments late. So, a lot of these monies were received late in the fiscal year. And, to their credit, they were using federal funds to address the shortage of the local appropriations for those respective fiscal years. To this day, the numbers are coming from an audit report, and we actually met with the Public School System to run their numbers so that we are actually accurate, that were based off on an audit report for the Public School System Fiscal Year 2022. With that being said, when we met with the Public School System administration, they actually provided their numbers. What we had on the audit report was very accurate to what they had in their respective accounts. So, I asked the members that we support this legislation. This would move the Public School System’s current budget for Fiscal Year 2026 to \$36.6 million rather than the \$31 million that is currently appropriated to them. And, with the passage of this, the marginal loan, that gets us another step closer to the revised budget that we are hopeful that we are going to work on, with the availability of \$29 million to be freed up. And that would assist us, at least this body, to be able to move some funds. Because the Public School System needs to get their magic number of roughly about \$40 million. This legislation will get us closer to \$40 million. To be clear, the legislative intent for this \$4,911,848 is not only for the first quarter for the Public School System. So, the remittance on a monthly basis will continue. This will add on to their Fiscal Year 2026 budget authorization for usage. Again, colleagues, I ask and seek your support. I apologize to our Speaker, as he is the sitting president for the Association of Pacific Island Legislatures. And we had to bother the members in getting this legislation done, taking away their time from the Association of Pacific

Island Legislatures, to address this need for the Public School System. And so that their board can take actions in adopting the resolution, and allow the Public School System Commissioner to be flexible in his ability to address the needs of the Public School System with this legislation. It will actually give them the opportunity to restructure their austerity measure. Rather than going 2 Mondays off, they are looking at something less than that. And, obviously, as we know through their news release, that they actually moved the date of austerity to November 17, 2025. But this would give them time, at least, a greater idea of their financial situation as we address the Fiscal Year 2026 budget with the new monies. The potential new monies that we are going to be freeing up to address our financial needs here in the Commonwealth. With that, colleagues, I thank you again for signing off on this legislation. I apologize, Mr. Speaker, to you and to the delegates of the Association of Pacific Island Legislatures, for bothering and getting all your signatures on this legislation to pre-file for today's action. With that, again, thank you, members. I seek all your support for this legislation.

*There being no further discussion on the floor, the Chair recognized the Clerk to call the roll for vote.*

*The Clerk called the roll on the motion for the passage of H. B. No. 24-70, First and Final Reading, with the following results:*

Representative Roy Christopher A. Ada	Yes
Representative Vincent Raymond Aldan	Yes
Representative Daniel Iwashita Aquino Jr.	Yes
Representative Blas Jonathan “BJ” Tenorio Attao	Yes
Representative Roman Cepeda Benavente	Yes
Representative Angelo Atalig Camacho	Yes
Representative Diego Vincent Fejeran Camacho	Yes
Representative Joel Castro Camacho	Yes
Representative Joseph Arriola Flores	Yes
Representative Marissa Renee Flores	Yes
Representative Thomas John Dela Cruz Manglona	Yes
Representative Julie Marie Atalig Ogo	Yes
Representative Malcolm Jason Omar	Yes
Representative Raymond Ulloa Palacios	Yes
Representative Elias Jerome Malite Rangamar	Absent (Excused)
Representative John Paul Palacios Sablan	Yes
Representative Patrick Hofschneider San Nicolas	Yes
Representative Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez	Yes
Representative Denita Kaipat Yangetmai	Yes
Representative Ralph Naraja Yumul	Yes

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Clerk Linda B. Muña: Mr. Speaker, all 19 members present voted “yes.”

Speaker Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez: Thank you, Clerk. With all 19 members present voting “yes,” House Bill No. 24-70 hereby passes the House. I recognize the Floor Leader.

*The Chair called for recess.*

*The House recessed at 11:25 a.m.*

*Recess*

*The House reconvened at 11:25 a.m.*

Speaker Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez: Before we went on recess, the floor leader had the floor for another motion for bill passage. I recognize the Floor Leader.

*The Floor Leader moved for the passage on First and Final Reading H. B. No. 24-33:*

**H. B. No. 24-33:** To statutorily define the scope of the Commonwealth’s annual General Revenues within the meaning of Article XV, Section 1(e) of the NMI Constitution.

*The motion was seconded; the Chair opened the floor for discussion. There being no discussion on the floor, the Chair recognized the Clerk to call the roll for vote.*

*The Clerk called the roll on the motion for the passage of H. B. No. 24-33, First and Final Reading, with the following results:*

Representative Roy Christopher A. Ada	Yes
Representative Vincent Raymond Aldan	Yes
Representative Daniel Iwashita Aquino Jr.	Yes
Representative Blas Jonathan “BJ” Tenorio Attao	Yes
Representative Roman Cepeda Benavente	Yes
Representative Angelo Atalig Camacho	Yes
Representative Diego Vincent Fejeran Camacho	Yes
Representative Joel Castro Camacho	Yes
Representative Joseph Arriola Flores	Yes
Representative Marissa Renee Flores	Yes
Representative Thomas John Dela Cruz Manglona	Yes
Representative Julie Marie Atalig Ogo	Yes
Representative Malcolm Jason Omar	Yes
Representative Raymond Ulloa Palacios	Yes
Representative Elias Jerome Malite Rangamar	Absent (Excused)
Representative John Paul Palacios Sablan	Yes
Representative Patrick Hofschneider San Nicolas	Yes
Representative Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez	Yes

Representative Denita Kaipat Yangetmai	Yes
Representative Ralph Naraja Yumul	Yes

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Clerk Linda B. Muña: Mr. Speaker, all 19 members present voted “yes.”

Speaker Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez: Thank you, Clerk. With all 19 members present voting “yes,” House Bill No. 24-33 hereby passes the House. We now proceed to Item No. 17, Miscellaneous Business, and the floor is open.

### **MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS**

*The Chair recognized Representative Blas Jonathan “BJ” Tenorio Attao.*

Representative Blas Jonathan “BJ” Tenorio Attao: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues, for your support on House Bill No. 24-70 for the Public School System. Obviously, it is going to get them closer to the \$40 million target that they have been asking for. So, that would assist us in the budget process, or the revised budget process. Thank you, again, colleagues for your supporting House Bill No. 24-68. I understand that is a very difficult situation that they have been pinned the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in regards to these negotiations. And unfortunately, we were not a part of the discussions. I echo the Floor Leader and I support her position that the legislature, at the very least, the presiding officers, should have been aware of what was being discussed in Washington DC. And I know that the Secretary of Finance and the team that was there are trying their very best in getting the information out this way. But it is very unfortunate that they were given a one-week window to sit with the members of the Office of Insular Affairs, or whoever else in the U.S. Congress or the White House, to negotiate the terms and the conditions of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands are facing. Unfortunately, at the same time, we also showed that there were other options, right? We introduced what became Public Law 24-13. So, they saw that. They saw that as an option that the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands has not exhausted. But I agree with the Floor Leader, that they have made unilateral decisions without our agreement to put us in certain financial situations. We do not want to dwell in the past, but we also do not want to forget about the past. If we forget about the past, we are going to end up repeating the same problems that our people are facing today. So, with that, at the very least, I am humbly asking that the administration please include, at the very least, the Speaker of the House and the Senate President on the table with these negotiations. Because when we are faced with financial problems in the general public, the House of Representatives is always going to be the first one that is going to be blamed. We are not taking any actions, but we cannot take any actions if we do not have numbers to work with. Fortunately, we have been working as much as possible with the administration, our counterparts in the Senate, and all the other available entities available to sit down and negotiate with us to free up some money to help our people and their needs. Even with that, we are still facing austerity measures. We passed the legislation that is going to help the Public School System, and even with that they are still going to implement austerity measures. The revised budget that we are working

on will still include austerity measures. The options that we are faced with are very, very tough. We have been faced with fire, after fire, after fire, and it is very unfortunate, because we have plans. As a body, we plan in building infrastructure to make our homes better. But unfortunately, other situations, pop up and there is nobody to blame. It just happens. Right now the federal government is in shut down. The trickle-down effect, our people are put in situations where they are not going to have food on the table. Until the 11<sup>th</sup> hour they come around and say, “Oh by the way, we are going to give you guys 50%.” Yet, it is this body that is being blamed for inaction of finding resources to get to our people, so they can have food on the table. This \$1 million legislation that we are hopeful to act on – when the Speaker calls for session, hopefully very soon – is not going to solve the problem, but at the very least, it is not going to leave anybody hungry. There is going to be food on the table. The 50% great, but your inability to sit down and work your problems out in the U.S. Congress is not our fault. We do not agree on everything here in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. But, at the very least, we do not put our people in a predicament to suffer. If that is a decision that needs to be made 8,000 miles away to put us in a tougher situation, then so be it. Let them do it, right? But at the end of the day, we stand for our people and we continue to stand for our people. Whether it is a financial need for food on the table, a financial need for our educational system, we find ways to help our people. It is not the greatest solution, it is not the perfect solution, but it is something that we see. We empathize and we think with our hearts as much as we think with our brains. Unfortunately, 8,000 miles away they do not think the same way. They want to play the political mess. We throw that to the side; we sit together; and we figure it out. We do not have to agree on everything, but we know we are going to come up with some sort of solution for our people. With that, I thank you, colleagues here in the House. I thank our brothers and sisters up in the Senate, the administration, governmental departments, agencies, and entities that joined in this process. We will continue to do it. I guess they will probably throw something else next month. But at the very least, when this budget process happens, we are able to reserve \$4.9 million in a reserve account. So that should we ever have to face something like this, where there is not going to be food on the table for families here in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Or we are going to cut school days for our students. That \$4.9 million is going to be there to help our people. Thank you all for your work and efforts. Mr. Speaker, thank you for your leadership. To our Chairman of Ways and Means, I do not think he slept since September 2<sup>nd</sup> of this year, but it is our job. It is not our people’s job to worry. It is our job to take away their worries from them and provide solutions for them. Again, thank you, colleagues and Mr. Speaker.

*The Chair recognized Representative Thomas John Dela Cruz Manglona.*

Representative Thomas John Dela Cruz Manglona: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you, Representative Attao, for those sentiments. I just want to take this time to recognize the efforts of Representative King-Hinds in Washington DC. She is one member of hundreds, a non-voting member at that. She is doing all that she can to get the assistance for our people. When it comes to food, the basic necessities, we have to exhaust all efforts. I understand the Marianas Pacific Land Trust situation, and I understand that constantly having to borrow from them is not ideal. But when it comes down to our basic needs for our people, I understand that we need to do what we must. But I also would like to suggest, privy to our conversations this morning, that we band together with Representative King-Hinds and speak directly to DC. I understand that the 902 talks are mostly privy to the Executive Branch. But at some point, we do have to band together and have

them realize our situation here. A lot of times, we get thrown to the side. Most of the members in DC do not even know that we exist. And we have to make our presence known. We have to reach out directly, if it has to be our president, to help them understand our situation here. We are a part of America. We are crucial to America's war strategy. We are important. It is not in America's best interest for the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands' economy to fail, and we are trying our best. We are still a very new Commonwealth. The covenant is an agreement that we are still trying to work on and figure out. But I think, at the very basic, the guarantee from the United States was to help us to become economically sustainable, right? And I know that there have been mistakes that have been made in the past. We have to learn from our past. We cannot continue to create these same cycles of up and down. But at some point, we do have to band together as a legislature and as a government, and let our voices be heard. If it is America first, if our president is pushing America first, we are America. Send us some American investment. Send something here. I know we get a lot of federal funding, but it comes with a lot of red tape at times. I just feel like we need to band together with Representative King-Hines, Deputy Secretary Demapan, and see how we can meet with those people in Washington DC, and not wait for when they are available. We have to have our voices felt now, so that we can rectify these situations and not keep going back to the Marianas Pacific Land Trust, and not going through all these drastic measures. I just wanted to take that time to say that. Thank you, colleagues, for exhausting all efforts. We are trying our best here to figure the situation out. I also want to commend my colleague, Representative Angelo Camacho. We decided to just get together and put together some sort of food drive. We understand that we are allocating these monies, and the \$1 million will be available soon, but families are not eating right now. We want to do what we can to bridge that gap for a couple of days. We understand that our resources are very low. So, we went out to the local businesses, and they gave from their heart in Kagman. Imagine that, businesses are struggling, and they still are trying to help. I would encourage everybody to try and do something. I know we are all doing our best. Me and Congressman Angelo Camacho, we are focused on our precinct, too. But we also want to help everyone. I just want to take the time to thank him and all of you, my colleagues, for doing all that we can. We are trying our best, and I just wanted to reiterate that to the public. Thank you.

*The Chair recognized Representative Roy Christopher Aldan Ada.*

Representative Roy Christopher Aldan Ada: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And to Representatives Attao and Manglona, thank you. I sympathize with you. Your sentiments with what are going on. With everything that is going on—the economy and the hardships. Even with our revenue and just sustaining public service essentials. Public service is difficult. And just when you think it could not get any worse, with the suspension of federal funds that is coming in. The majority of the federal programs are jeopardized, and now we are in this predicament. I just want to say to the public that it is really heartbreaking to know that there are a lot of people out there in need. There are many tougher challenges that we do not see, especially people who rely on that federal assistance, going through medical challenges, or pension. That is not enough to sustain or supplement for their needs. I just want to let the public know that we talk about this every day that we meet. And we are so concerned about the wellbeing of the public. Also, with the \$29 million marginal loan, this will ensure that the retirees get their pension on time. I would like to thank our Chairman for Ways and Means for pushing this. I want to extend my appreciation to these nonprofit organizations like Karidat, Salvation Army, the Diocese Churches for stepping up and

doing all these food drives to help out the people who are in need. And all the independent organizations and civic organizations that are doing just that. I am pretty sure most of us have received a lot of requests about fundraisers that they are doing to assist with the current situation with the Nutritional Assistance Program. I would like to thank all those organizations. And, to include the Food Stamp office, thank you for being on top of the issue. To our US Delegate, Kimberlyn Hines, thank you for keeping everybody updated with what is going on, and most especially your efforts. And to the Department of Interior, thank you for your assistance. With that, Mr. Speaker, I yield.

*The Chair recognized Representative John Paul Palacios Sablan.*

Representative John Paul Palacios Sablan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do want to extend my appreciation to all the members for all your support for House Bill No. 24-68. We are a step ahead of us in trying to address their revised budget. But I just want to inform the members that there are still a lot of work ahead of us. After meeting with the administration yesterday, the other arising challenges, right now, before us, is GHLI for the retirees. And right now, the administration is under discussion with our one and only insurance, Aetna. I am looking forward to working with Chairman Jude Hofschneider, from Senate Committee on Fiscal Affairs, to reconvene jointly as Ways and Means, and Fiscal Affairs. So that we can tackle on further, and get the revised budget moving forward, to address the many challenges and shortfalls that are in place on the communication on the revised budget from the administration. So, I just want to inform the members of Ways and Means, we will continue our work again next week. Hopefully we can get a compromise on a revised budget. Sooner rather than later. Thank you.

*The Chair recognized Representative Daniel Iwashita Aquino, Jr.*

Representative Daniel Iwashita Aquino, Jr.: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First, I just want to let all members know that the Salvation Army is doing monthly food feeding. They basically feed 8,00 individuals per month. If you have money to spare, at least \$100 from your account, maybe we can contribute that to the Salvation Army, so they can help feed families out there. Second, I want to thank our Delegate Kimberlyn King-Hinds for her hard work and her tireless efforts in helping the people of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. I also to convey out there my colleague, Chairman John Paul Sablan, for all the projects that we do together. I want to thank Kenneth Kaneshi, Wenny Haruo, Dereck Aichi, and Jeffrey Palacios. And I want to thank our Speaker for the flexibility during All Souls Day. I dropped my dad to dialysis, and I was confronted by the people attending dialysis about the current situation. And a lot of people are putting a lot of emphasis on the governor. I am close to the governor, he is like a dad. I call him Papa Tang. So, when I hear negative things, it rubs me the wrong way, because I know that guy, his heart. He is a very down-to-earth individual. And he is just somebody that really cares about the well-being of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, as with the House members. When we see the social media about how we just do not care, that is not true. I see it from every member. I see it in our debates, the Floor Leader. That was a very interesting point that she had brought up, because whatever happened in the past with the garment industry. Look at now, we are talking about automobile industries coming here just to get that “Made in the CNMI, USA” tag, which is what they did in the garment industry. So, what makes that any different? They killed the immigration. They killed our biggest revenues. So, I just want to thank the people out here. Please

be patient because we do care. We see Chairman Attao with his bills for the food stamp. We see other members here pushing revenue generating measures, and we do care. I was raised by my mom, who raised 5 kids. When she passed away, my heart broke. When I see mothers out there going on social media talking about how we do not care and they need to buy Similac, I have been there. I got 3 kids, and I am very independent. I used to take telephones and broke irons and rewire them and sell them at the flea market. I did what I could to survive, and there is no way that anybody can tell me that they cannot do the same thing. I saw a guy in San Antonio selling onions for a dollar. There are these people doing what they can to survive. So, I think the more we express our frustration, maybe we should just do it in private. And that is what I am telling the people. We are trying our best. My last point is to my colleague, Thomas Manglona, who is trying to steal our thunder by trying to promote precinct 5. But I still say to the people out there, precinct 2 is where it is at. And I thank him for any donation he is going to give to precinct 2 for the donation drive. And we too are on top of that. To the people of precinct 2, Chairman John Paul Sablan and I are doing what we can. Thank you.

*The Chair recognized Representative Roman Cepeda Benavente.*

Representative Roman Cepeda Benavente: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I respectfully regret that I did not ask the Floor Leader to recall Senate Bill No. 24-4, which was referred to my committee earlier. Unfortunately, the reason I did not dispute this bill or make any recommendations to gather my committee together, was because we were all so busy. We had challenges, I had challenges with the budget through the Public School System. I have been meeting with the Public School System, with other members on my committee, and we have been struggling trying to make time. We are trying to hustle out and try to make everything as quick as possible, so we can come up with a tangible number to satisfy the Public School Systems' needs. Unfortunately, it did not give me the time and the effort to do the committee meetings, and come up with a result to put it into the committee. This Senate bill was crafted by a former colleague from the legislature from the House. He asked me to go ahead and try to submit it in, or put it on the calendar. But I am going to formally ask the Floor Leader to please put Senate Bill No. 24-4 on the Bill Calendar for the next session? I apologize for the inconvenience, members. But these are the things we find on a daily base. Yes, we want to do a lot of things, we want to contribute. We can say all that we want to say, you do not have to say it. Just do it. That is the motto. Do not talk about it, just do it.

Speaker Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez: Thank you, Representative Roman Benavente. Floor Leader, please take note of that. We will go ahead and place that on the Bill Calendar for the next later session. I recognize Representative Benavente.

Representative Roman Cepeda Benavente: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

*The Chair recognized the Floor Leader.*

Floor Leader Marissa Renee Flores: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and Chairman Benavente. Duly noted, Chairman Benavente. Again, this goes back to a lot of things that we are now faced with. We have a humanitarian emergency; we have austerity crisis. There is just so many things going on in our community right now. But I must express the importance of this unified voice, which goes back to what Representative Manglona was saying. We need to come together. I give my

appreciation to Delegate King-Hinds, who I have had the opportunity to exchange on and off camera about issues that greatly affect us. It is unfortunate that she does not have the budgetary allowances to allow her to go and lobby certain things, including cabotage concerns. Which we are waiting on what the federal government is going to decide to do with that. But that totally restricts us once again. But we are not talking about those things because it is a much higher government over our local government. But that covenant was there for a reason. We have the rights to self-govern ourselves. There are terms in that covenant that greatly express what this marriage is supposed to look like. But apparently there are too many interpreters for us up there. They think they know what is best for us, but they do not. I have to express this, because Delegate King-Hinds has been talking about this, talking about it the whole time. While she is talking about it over there, we are over here fighting amongst each other about what local bills to pass, do not do revenue generating bills because it is going to hurt this and that. At this point, we are pushed to the corner. And as much as we do not want to do taxes, we have to. Because this administration, the Trump administration, is giving everything to the states to pull yourself out of a rut. How do we do that with no new investor? How do we do that without airlines coming in? How do we do that with all these restrictions? How? So, I urge everybody in the public to voice that out. Send Delegate King-Hinds an email. These are the concerns on the covenant. Address this because she is very much aware. She is an attorney, for crying out loud. If there is anyone that knows how to advocate, it is her, and a lot of the other people that are there. But from now on and moving forward, this administration, the executive branch – and I am not going to go into what Representative Attao has mentioned because he is right on a lot of the things he said. I better not find out that there is pay raise anywhere in the executive branch. I better not find out there are local hires under local funded sources, because we have the authority to investigate such actions. But we cannot do that right now, because you know why? It is not important. What is important is feeding the hungry. What is important is finding money to help the Public School System. What is important is figuring out how can we be self-sustaining. That is important. But if this executive branch, and I know that his team is watching, this committee, this House of Representatives better not find out about local funds there is new hire, pay raises on the \$4.5 million that is about to come down from the federal government. Because while you give those raises, we need to figure out how to feed those receiving the Nutritional Assistance Program. I will tell you this much, if you give the pay raise, come next year, how do you suppose we are going to fund that? How? So this pay raise, it better stop. This hiring for nonsense better stop, because we have not hired. Our Legislative Assistants, Clerks, staff, and everyone in the Legislature and the Bureau are overwhelmed and underpaid. But they do not complain. Not once. They cannot even go on leave. Let us be honest, our staff in the Legislative Bureau cannot even go on leave. But I got the executive branch hiring. I do not know for what. I got pay raises happening. Why? Totally unjustified. But they can. You want a law for that? I am pretty sure we could do that. That is easy. But then I am pretty sure someone is going to say that is overreach. Everything is overreach. We are doing everything we can to help our community. But there are branches also that need to help themselves and start doing what they are supposed to do, start collecting. But one of the only things I really wanted to express here, Mr. Speaker, is that we need to start meeting with the federal government. And now unfortunately, since they are in shutdown, even if we wanted to leave, we cannot go. We cannot go and see them because they are shut down. So, that is important, colleagues. We need to figure out another way to negotiate our terms and conditions with the federal government, because I am not going to be the tip of the spear. This community will not be the tip of the spear for nothing. My home and my people are important. And if they do not

understand that, then maybe it is time we all go over there and maybe we will get the executive branch to pay, since they have money to pay raises and new hires. So, please do not make me find out and do not, I do not need to see this anywhere on the OPA as a complaint, or someone asking me to do an OGA, because someone was hired under local funds paid for the millions of dollars that is going to be coming down through the federal government. That is completely unacceptable. While you threaten the austerity of the ones in the bottom, you are going to keep the ones on the top and give them a pay raise. Something is definitely wrong with that plan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I yield.

*There being no further discussion on the floor, the Chair proceeded to Item No. 18, Announcements, and recognized Representative Denita Kaipat Yangetmai.*

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

Representative Denita Kaipat Yangetmai: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the President of the Association of Pacific Islands Legislatures, and the other Director of the Association of Pacific Islands Legislatures, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands' Association of Pacific Islands Legislatures, Senator Jude Hofschneider, would like to thank everyone for all the wonderful gifts you all donated for our friends from the Pacific. Kiribas was really happy, elated about their gifts. So, they said, "Okay! Let us go spend Christmas in June." We are going to Kiribas in June. So, get ready. That is Christmas Island. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

*The Chair recognized Representative Vincent Raymond Aldan.*

Representative Vincent Raymond Aldan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This coming 10<sup>th</sup>, next week Monday, we will be doing the OSHA construction class for OSHA 10 and OSHA 30. That is open to the public. First come, first serve. There are 30 seats available, and it is free. Hopefully, maybe hoping, praying, that some of these government employees get out of the government and go work for the construction company or something in the private sector. Maybe we could just reduce our budget. It will be on the 10<sup>th</sup> of November at the Koblerville Community Center, and starts at 06:00 p.m. We will keep doing it until the 30-hour class is done. The class is free. You will learn something, so that you could get a job in the private sector.

*The Chair recognized Representative Roman Cepeda Benavente.*

Representative Roman Cepeda Benavente: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to thank everybody that is here today. It is an interesting discussion, and also considering the fact that our colleague over here mentioned about the Association of Pacific Islands Legislatures. I was surprised, and I had the opportunity to meet with a lot of those Micronesians that were here and connect with them. So, it was something that was very touching, and very fruitful for everybody.

Speaker Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez: I am sorry to interrupt. *Guaha yomu i* announcement?

Representative Roman Cepeda Benavente: *Guaha yoku i* announcement, *bai i sangani i* announcement. *Yaho bai i sunggan uyu na i bill ni tapâsu pâgu, eyi to define the 25%. I bill ni tapâsu pâgu nu, hunggan dângkulu nu katgui-yu i bill. Ni parata nâhi guatu i Public School*

System. *Loa 25%, from 15% i Public School System way back antes esti. Antesdi talaika i amended constitution. Sa i amended constitution eyi I 18-12. Eyu na bill I 18-12. Guaha nu kao mafeyu na bill. Ya legislative initiative ya doku yu i publiku, ya mapasa nu publiku, ma – Pues ginen enao 25% gaigi i sa'nalun, gi anoliyon na bill. From 15% ma u agusaolu i 25%. Pagu i 25% ma di timimiña kao i tatapa na numero i pumachule pat i takilu i numero pama chule i Public School System? Pues eyi gi nale'leku, maolek ya ta pasi esti ya guaha kabaoles na direkson tu mamanu. Manu i sacarafiso lakkue para depatumentu siha yan puma un dibi I gobenumentu. Debi ta guaha yan ta nahi lakkue puma lu ya ta pasi I obligason I gobenumentu. Pues munayi enao debit tenahi i Public School System i 25%. Lao pagu momenty malagoña kumu na rokoi i salapi, ginen i revenue taxation malagoña pu ma chule pues ti enigi esti na bill para ditimiña na debidi tanahi fineniha fan manahi, para todudu. Pues eyi gi nei kumo patu para chule bentis sinko sientu. Thank you. Si yu'us ma'asi.*

Speaker Edmund Joseph Sablan Villagomez: Thank you, Representative Benavente. Before we move to Adjournment, I am just going to let you all know that I plan on calling for an emergency session tomorrow morning at 10:00 a.m. to address the Nutritional Assistance Program, or food stamp, situation. We now proceed to Adjournment, and I recognize the Floor Leader.

### ADJOURNMENT

Floor Leader Marissa Renee Flores: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I hereby move to adjourn subject to the call of the Chair. So move.

*The motion was seconded; the Chair opened the floor for discussion. There being no discussion on the floor, the motion to adjournment was carried by voice vote. There was no “nay” vote.*

*The House adjourned at 12:06 p.m.*

Respectfully submitted,



Brenalyn T. Santos  
House Journal Clerk

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### APPEARANCE OF LOCAL BILLS

**FIRST LEGISLATIVE DAY:** 1st Legislative appearance of a local bill is on the day it is introduced.

**SECOND LEGISLATIVE DAY:**

H. L. B. NO. 24-34: To establish the “Saipan Economic Incentive Zone” within the Third Senatorial District, and to authorize the Commonwealth Economic Incentive Authority and other relevant agencies to administer and regulate investment activities within the designated zone. Introduced by REPS. ANGELO A. CAMACHO and REP. VINCENT R. ALDAN (*for themselves, Representatives Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao, Joel C. Camacho, Marissa R. Flores, and John Paul P. Sablan*) on October 24, 2025.

**THIRD LEGISLATIVE DAY:**

H. L. B. NO. 24-29: To rename the “Smiling Cove Marina” the “Diego T. Benavente Smiling Cove Marina” in honor of former Legislator and former Lieutenant Governor Diego Tenorio Benavente. Introduced by REP. VINCENT R. ALDAN of Saipan, Precinct 1 (*for himself, Representatives Daniel I. Aquino Jr., Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao, Angelo A. Camacho, Thomas J. DIC. Manglona, John Paul P. Sablan, and Ralph N. Yumul*) on October 9, 2025.

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***Appearance of Measures introduced on the House Floor during House Session on October 24, 2025:***

H. B. NO. 24-68: To conditionally authorize the Marianas Public Land Trust to establish a margin account solely to facilitate the \$29,000,000 loan authorized under Public Law 24-13, subject to the continuing fiduciary and constitutional duties of the Trustees. Introduced by REP. JOHN PAUL P. SABLAN of Saipan, Precinct 2 (*for himself, Representatives Vincent R. Aldan, Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao, Roman C. Benavente, Angelo A. Camacho, Joel C. Camacho, Marissa R. Flores, Julie M. A. Ogo, Denita Kaipat Yangetmai, and Ralph N. Yumul*) on October 24, 2025; subsequently moved and place on the Bill Calendar. [*No public comments were received in an open and public meeting when the legislation appeared on the House Agenda of October 24, 2025*]

H. B. NO. 24-69: To amend Title 70, Subchapter 70-30.3 of the Northern Mariana Islands Administrative Code by adding a new section to authorize Indefinite-Delivery, Indefinite-Quantity Contracts; and for other purposes. Introduced by REP. MARISSA R. FLORES of Saipan, Precinct 3 (*for herself, Representatives Roman C. Benavente, Joel C. Camacho, and Denita Kaipat Yangetmai*) on October 24, 2024; subsequently referred to the House Committee on Commerce and the House Committee on House Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations. [*No public comments were received in an open and public meeting when the legislation appeared on the House Agenda of October 24, 2025*]

H. L. B. NO. 24-34: To establish the “Saipan Economic Incentive Zone” within the Third Senatorial District, and to authorize the Commonwealth Economic Incentive Authority and other relevant agencies to administer and regulate investment activities within the designated zone. Introduced by REPS. ANGELO A. CAMACHO and REP. VINCENT R. ALDAN (*for themselves, Representatives Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao, Joel C. Camacho, Marissa R. Flores, and John Paul P. Sablan*) on October 24, 2025.

H. RES. NO. 24-15: To honor and express our sincerest gratitude to Mr. Noboru Hirayama who has greatly contributed to the preservation and promotion of Japanese and Saipan history in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands through his work in the reconstruction of the Saipan Katori Shrine. Introduced by REP. EDMUND S. VILLAGOMEZ of Saipan, Precinct 3, (*for himself, Representatives Roy C.A. Ada, Vincent R. Aldan, Daniel I. Aquino Jr., Blas Jonathan “BJ” T. Attao, Roman C. Benavente, Angelo A. Camacho, Diego V. F. Camacho, Joel C. Camacho, Joseph A. Flores, Marissa R. Flores, Thomas J. DIC. Manglona, Julie M. A. Ogo, Malcolm J. Omar, Raymond U. Palacios, Elias J.M. Rangamar, John Paul P. Sablan, Patrick H. San Nicolas, Denita Kaipat Yangetmai, and Ralph N. Yumul*) on October 27, 2025; subsequently placed on the Resolution Calendar.